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MAHATMA GANDHI'S FREEDOM MOVEMENT AND THE CONTRIBUTION OF JHARKHANDI WOMEN : A HISTORICAL ANALYSIS

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ABSTRACT

Mahatma Gandhi's entry into the Indian national independence movement was a turning point in Indian history. Mahatma Gandhi is credited with incorporating ideas like TRUTH, NON-VIOLENCE and SATYAGRAH in independence. The special thing about the various movements led by Mahatma Gandhi was that people from all walks of life skillfully participated in the Champaran satyagraha to quit India movement. In these movements of Mahatma Gandhi , along with people from all parts of the country, people of Jharkhand also had a special contribution. The specialty of these movement in Jharkhand was the widespread participation of women participated in them in large number.

KEY WORDS

Mahatma Gandhi, National Movement, Jharkhand, Women, Freedom, Non-Cooperation, Civil Disobedience, Satyagraha

GANDHI JI returned to India in January 1915. His struggle and successes in south Africa had made him very popular in India. Not only the educated Indians but also the common people had become well aware of Gandhi ji. Gandhi ji decided that he would tour the whole country for the next one year and observe the status quo of the common people. He also decided that for the time being he would not take any public step on any political issue. Gandhi ji disagreed with all the then political ideologies of India. He had already lost faith in moderate politics and he was also against the strategy of the home rule movement, that any trouble to the British was an opportunity for them. Although the home rule movement was quite popular at this time, its principal did not match Gandhi ji ideas. He believed that it was inappropriate to continue the home rule movement at the time when Britain was embroiled in the first world war. He argued that under these circumstances the best way to achieve nationalist goals was a **NON-VIOLENT SATYAGRAH.**

Gandhi ji declared that he would not be associated with any political organization, unless it adopted the path of **SATYAGRAH.** Before launching the non-cooperation movement , Gandhi ji participated in three struggles in 1917 and early 1918 – THE CHAMPARAN MOVEMENT [BIHAR] , and the AHMEDABAD and KHEDA [both in Gujrat] satyagraha. All three movement

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were related to local economic demands. The Ahmedabad movement was a movement of industrial Workes and the Champaran and Kheda were peasant movement.

After the success of these three initial movements, Gandhi ji emerged as a great leader and was recoganised as the face of the Indian freedom movement . After this, the three great freedom movement – NON-COOPERATION, CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE and QUIT INDIA MOVEMENT led by him and the contribution of the women of jharkahnd state in them can never be forgotten -

- **Non-cooperation movement -**

The mass movement led by mahatma Gandhi based on non-cooperation with the government against the injustice of the British government is called the non-cooperation movement. The background of the movement lies in the series of events that took place due to the steps taken by the british rule in the indian context after the first world war.

The non-cooperation movement emerged on the scene of the national independence movement against the backdrop of the economic difficulties arising after the first world war , the rowllet act, the imposition of martial law in Punjab, the Jallianwala Bagh massacre, the recommendations of the hunter commission regarding excesses in Punjab and the real motive behind Montagu Chamsford reforms.

In September, 1920 a special session held in culcutta passes a resolution to start the non-cooperation movement. Later , in December 1920 , the movement was approved in the annual session held in Nagpur under the chairmanship of Vijay Raghav Achari. Thus, the non – cooperation movement was started in January 1921 under the leadership of mahatma Gandhi. He believed that-

"अन्यायी को सहयोग देना पाप है , अतएव उनसे असहयोग की भावना रखनी होगी।"

On the call of Mahatma Gandhi , the people of jargon also joined the non cooperation movement. in 1920-21 Gandhiji himself came to Jharkhand and stayed at bhimraj Banshidhar Modi dharmshala in Ranchi. on the same day, holi of foreign clothes was burnt in front of the dharmshala . The most imporantant thing was that gandhi ji came in contact with tana bhagats

Hazaribagh was an important centre of the non-cooperation movement in Jharkhand. here many students left their studies and lawyers abandoned their practise. district Congress committee was established in 1920. in 1921 , this movement become more intense and as a result many people including Hazaribagh's woman revolutionary Saraswati Devi were arrested. when Gandhiji came to Daltonganj in January 1927 womans donated their jewellery for the movement.

along with this, the non-cooperation movement watch is spreading throughout Jharkhand and people from every section of society were participating in it. At the same time, 5 February 1922, after the Chaura chauri incident in Gorakhpur district of the United province, the Congress working committee in its bardoli meeting decided to suspend the movement.

On the suspension of the non-cooperation movement, Motilal Nehru wrote that -

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" यदि कन्याकुमारी के एक गांव ने अहिंसा का पालन नहीं किया, तो उसकी सजा हिमालय के एक गांव को क्यों मिलनी चाहिए?"

Similarly, Subhash Chandra Bose was also unhappy with this decision and he said that-

"इस समय जब की जनता का उत्साह चरम उत्कर्ष पर था , वापस लौटाने का आदेश दे देना राष्ट्रीय, दुर्भाग्य से कम नहीं"

- **The Civil Disobedience movement-**

Under the leadership of mahatma gandhi , the people started the civil disobedience movement . On 12th march , 1930, gandhi ji along with his 78 workers went from Sabarmati asharam to dandi situated on the seashore. The 241 mile journey took 24 days to complete. Shubhash chandra bose compared it to nepoleons journey to paris on his return from elba. Bombay chronical newspaper wrote -

"मनुष्य जाति के हृदय में राष्ट्र भक्ति की लहर ने इतने ज़ोर से कभी हिलोरें नहीं ली थी , जो इस अवसर पर ली , भारत के राष्ट्रीय स्वाधीनता के इतिहास में ऐसे महान आंदोलन का आरंभ कहा जाएगा"

After the non-cooperation movement, the next important effort of mahatma gandhi as a strong political step was the civil disobedience movement. Jharkhand also participated enthusiasticaly in this movement which started in 1930. In hazaribagh, district congress president saraswati devi and meera devi were the prominent women figures who participated in the salt satyagrah. Sadhana, daughter of a lecturer of st. Columbus college , was sent to jail. After the arrest of meera devi , mrs. Hassan immam and mrs. Gaur das came to jharkhand in connection with the movement. In santhal division , womens challenged the salt law under the leadership of mrs. Shailbala roy . Besides , a large number of women participated in the movement.

Seeing the lack of enthusiasm among people towards the movement, mahatma gandhi withdrew the civil disobedience movement in the patna meeting of may 1934. After this, gandhi ji seperated from the congress and started devoting full time to the program of upliftment of untouchables. After the end of the movement , the inclination of the congress again turned towards the legislature. The leaders of jharkhand followed the central leaders.

- **Quit india movement -**

Mahatma gandhi decided to launch his third major movemennt in 1942 to drive the british out of india, which is known as the quit india movement. On 8 august 1942, the all india congress committee passed the quit india movement resolution in a meeting held at gowalia tank, bombay and gave the mantra of KARO YA MARO. On the, morning of 9 august , gandhiji and other important congress leaders were arrested and congress was declared as an illegal organization. The congress socialist party gave momentum to this movement. Its